



INDONESIA: ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER 2006

Summary:

- On December 14, Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation founder Willie Smith announced plans to release around 200 orangutans into Baktikop Forest in Central Kalimantan.
- The Head of the Jakarta Sanitation Office warned of an impending crisis in Jakarta waste management on December 12.
- The Ministry of Forestry introduced an “Ecosystem Restoration Program” on December 5 aimed at rehabilitating former forest concession areas in Jambi and South Sumatra provinces.
- On December 18, the Meteorological and Geophysical Agency (BMG) installed six tsunami warning sirens in Aceh.
- In mid-December, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources’ Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (CVGHM) issued alerts for Mt. Soputan in North Sulawesi and Mt. Talang in West Sumatra in response to increased volcanic and seismic activity.
- On December 6, the National Nuclear Energy Agency (BATAN) announced plans to hold a tender process in 2008 for nuclear equipment suppliers and contractors needed to construct a planned Rp 15 trillion (US\$ 1.66 billion) nuclear power plant in Central Java.
- On December 20, the non-governmental organization Yayasan Pelita Ilmu (YPI) announced that the organization is having difficulty securing funding for their Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission program.

Orangutan Release Planned

On December 14, Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOS) founder Willie Smith announced plans to release around 200 orangutans into Baktikop Forest in Central Kalimantan sometime in early 2007. The timing of the release is subject to weather conditions in the area, which some experts expect to deteriorate in the coming months in association with the El Nino phenomenon. BOS rescued the orangutans from private entertainment providers in Semarang (Central Java), Yogyakarta, Bandung and Sukabumi (West Java) that had been exploiting the animals. Indonesia’s orangutan population is declining rapidly due to deforestation, forest fires, and illegal animal trafficking.

Jakarta Faces Waste Management Challenges

On December 12, Rama Boedi, Head of the Jakarta Sanitation Office, warned of an impending crisis in Jakarta waste management. The private firm PT Patriot Bekasi Bangkit (PBB) currently manages Jakarta’s largest dumpsite, Bantar Gebang, in Bekasi,

West Java. Because the Jakarta and Bekasi authorities have been dissatisfied with PBB's performance, they have refused to renew the firm's contract, which expired at the end of 2006. However, the Jakarta city authorities have failed to name a replacement management firm. The Bekasi House of Peoples Representatives has warned that the Bekasi government will cease all operations at the dumpsite in 2007 until a new manager is appointed, but as of January 5 the Jakarta Sanitation Office reports that the dump is still operating. A temporary closure of the site could cause significant disruptions in Jakarta's waste management system. According to Rama Boedi, Jakarta requires at least 2,000 temporary dumpsites in locations around the city to handle the volume of waste normally managed by Bantar Gebang, but only 1,300 such sites are currently operational.

Ecosystem Restoration Program Launched

On December 5, the Ministry of Forestry (MOF) introduced an "Ecosystem Restoration Program," aimed at rehabilitating Indonesian forests. The program, which the private company PT Restorasi Ekosistem Indonesia will run, includes a moratorium on logging in selected areas, the promotion of non-timber forest products, and the development of a range of eco-services. A consortium consisting of the Indonesia Forest Conservation Foundation, the United Kingdom-based Royal Society for Protection of Birds, and the global conservation partnership Birdlife International funds PT Restorasi Ekosistem. The MOF has allocated around 101,000 hectares (390 square miles) of forest land in Jambi and South Sumatra for the ecosystem restoration program. It will initially operate in the 60,000 hectare former PT Inhutani V concession area in South Sumatra Province. Once the timber firm Asia Log concludes its operations by 2011, the program will expand to Asia Log's 41,000 hectare concession area.

Tsunami Early Warning Sirens Installed

On December 18, the Meteorological and Geophysical Agency (BMG) announced the installation of six tsunami warning sirens in Aceh. BMG installed three sirens in Aceh Besar Regency and three in Banda Aceh city. BMG Head of Seismology Dr. Fauzi announced that, in addition to Aceh, BMG has installed six siren towers in Padang and six in Bali. The cost of each siren tower ranges from Rp 200-300 million rupiah (USD 22-33 thousand).

Volcanic Warnings Issued at Three Sites

On December 14, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources' Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (CVGHM) increased the alert status for Mt. Soputan in South Minahasa, North Sulawesi, to Alert Level 3 (large eruption possible within one to two weeks). The CVGHM raised the alert level in response to increased volcanic and seismic activity, including an average of 75 tremors every day, more than 100 daily lava falls, and the emission of thick smoke from the active volcano.

7. On December 17, the Directorate of Volcanology issued a similar statement about Mt. Talang in Batu Bajanjang, Solok Regency, and West Sumatra. Mt. Talang has been at

Alert Level 3 since early September 2006. The Mt. Talang monitoring officer warned people to avoid traveling within 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) of the peak. Mt. Talang has produced roughly 80 tremors a day and continues to spew hot gas as high as 700 meters. Local government authorities also recently warned people living or working near Mt. Merapi to be alert for possible volcanic material floods. According to the authorities, there are 6 million cubic meters of volcanic materials on the surface of Mt. Merapi that may fall into local rivers because of heavy rains, prompting flooding.

GOI To Hold Nuclear Plant Tender in 2008

On December 6, Ferhat Aziz, the Head of Legal and Public Relations at the National Nuclear Energy Agency (BATAN), announced plans to hold a tender process in 2008 for nuclear technology suppliers and other contractors needed to construct a planned Rp 15 trillion (USD 1.7 billion) nuclear power plant in Muria, Central Java. Constructing the nuclear plant is part of Indonesia's strategy to reduce dependency on oil-based electricity. According to Aziz, the Government will appoint a special body consisting of officials from BATAN, state-owned electricity company PLN, the Ministry of Research and Technology and the Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency to conduct the tender process. The body will be responsible for preparing the tender and selecting reliable suppliers of safe technology for the plant.

While the tender process will be open to all potential suppliers, the government expects to select companies from the United States, South Korea, France or Japan to work with local firms given that those countries' nuclear technologies already meet International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) standards. The Government hopes to finish construction of the power plant by 2010, with the plant becoming operational by 2017. Indonesia has received \$1.34 million in technical assistance from the International Atomic Energy Agency to develop safe nuclear power programs in 2007 and 2008.

Funding Source Needed for HIV Program

On December 20, the Vice Chairman of the non-governmental organization Yayasan Pelita Ilmu (YPI), Husein Habsyi, announced that the organization is having difficulty securing funding for its Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission program. Funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is set to expire in 2007 and the GOI has not yet provided a budget allocation to continue the program. Under the program, YPI and Ministry of Health (MOH) staff conduct blood tests to detect HIV, provide counseling services, and distribute anti-retroviral (AZT or Nevirapine) drugs to infected mothers. YPI and MOH staff work with Posyandu (Integrated Health Post) employees in six provinces with high HIV prevalence, including Banten, West Java, Papua, Jakarta, East Java, and Bali to administer the program. The YPI has been running the program since 1999.

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